

# **Coffee and Health**

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## **SUMMARY**

During the past decade a remarkable shift has been observed in reports concerning health effects of caffeine. Twenty years ago the medical literature used to culminate in allegations on entirely negative aspects of coffee consumption. They included a great variety of diseases, among them eight different cancer sites, heart attacks, strokes, hypercholesterolemia and hypertension, birth defects, gout, cirrhosis of the liver, diabetes, stomach ulcers and osteoporosis. We are now witnessing a total negation of all assumed and perceived cause and effect associations. Even more compelling appear reports on positive health effects of coffee-caffeine. They range from an analgesic adjuvant to systemic therapy for neonatal apnea and as an effective bronchodilator in young patients with asthma, from topical treatment of atopic dermatitis and a booster of pain-free walking time for patients with chronic stable angina, to the prevention of postprandial hypotension in elderly patients and as a good source of potassium. The vindication of coffee was to be expected but it was amazing that it took so long for common sense to return, and even more surprising that the many allegations emerged in the first place.